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# Washington Officialdom Has Fled

## *Government Running On Automatic Pilot*

By Harry F. Rosenthal  
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The U.S. government is alive and well, but not necessarily present and accounted for.

It is on the beach. Or in the mountains. Or abroad. Anywhere but Washington. It is, after all, August.

President Reagan is at his mountain ranch in California, leaving the running of government to others.

Vice President Bush is in Kennebunkport, Maine, leaving the running of government to others.

White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan is taking time off, leaving the running of government to underlings, who are rotating jobs so others can take time off.

Secretary of State George P. Shultz is in California.

The whereabouts of Central Intelligence Agency Director William J. Casey is a state secret.

For a decision from Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, one must dial Bar Harbor, Maine, or settle for Weinberger's No. 2, Deputy Secretary William Howard Taft IV, who is really at his desk.

Treasury Secretary James A. Baker III is visiting his mother in Houston, while his deputy, Richard G. Darman, is in charge.

Government checks are going out by the millions, uninterrupted,

even though Treasurer Katherine D. Ortega is vacationing in Canada. At the same time, the Canadian ambassador to the United States, Allan Gottlieb, is vacationing in Europe.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Mark S. Fowler is interrupting his vacation in South Carolina to make a speech in Anchorage. Three of his top-level associates are on the job, but out of town—in Switzerland, at Sugar Loaf Resort in Cedar, Mich., and in Rockport, Maine.

Lee M. Thomas, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, is just back from two days of inspecting forests in Vermont and New York state.

Congress has recessed until after Labor Day. The Supreme Court is on recess, too, although the nine justices have been in and out of town during the summer. There is a mechanism to handle emergency requests for stays of execution, even if the justices are away.

The Office of Management and Budget is being run by Acting Director Joseph R. Wright Jr. while the director-to-be, James C. Miller III, is on vacation.

Not everybody in government has fled Washington.

Attorney General Edwin Meese III was photographed in newspapers and appeared on television reports this month by leading a coast-to-coast government marijuana eradication program. He has taken a three-day trip to Mexico to discuss with his counterparts the problems of drug-trafficking.

Even those working find ways to be out of Washington in August. This week, Agriculture Secretary John R. Block has been at the Indiana State Fair, addressed regional editors in Chicago and left yesterday for the Soviet Union and Hungary to boost U.S. farm products.

Interior Secretary Donald Hodel has spent time in the West, on a raft, astride a horse, pedaling a bicycle and tramping through the woods. This week, he is holding public meetings in California on offshore oil drilling.

*After writing this report, Harry F. Rosenthal departed immediately for Cape Canaveral to cover today's scheduled launch of the space shuttle.*